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SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL SECURITY ASSISTANT BRENNAN
STRESSES COMMITMENT TO DEEPER COOPERATION

REF: A: MEXICO 3617

B: MEXICO 3468

¶1. (SBU) Summary. John Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, used his visit to Mexico, December 14-15, to advance U.S.-Mexico cooperation against organized crime. Accepting an unprecedented format for senior bilateral meetings, the GOM organized each session around critical themes including the integration of intelligence and operations, building capacity to effect prosecutions, money laundering, and arms trafficking. Each meeting became the equivalent of a Mexico-U.S. Deputies or Principals meeting. Mexico proposed establishing an intelligence fusion center to force comprehensive sharing and assessment of intelligence. Both sides agreed our pilot projects in Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez were essential to meet the concrete challenges posed by organized crime throughout Mexico in areas plagued by high levels of violence and crime. The press reported widely and favorably on the U.S. transfer of five Bell helicopters to Mexico at a ceremony during which Brennan delivered the keynote address for the U.S. side. End Summary.

Combining Efforts on the Four Pillars of Merida

¶2. (SBU) The GOM agreed to put together a schedule of meetings with deputy or cabinet level representatives from key law enforcement agencies centered around thematic issues that drive our cooperation on law enforcement matters. Discussions opened with an evaluation of progress and outstanding challenges on our four pillar approach (Disrupting and Dismantling DTOs, Institutionalizing the Rule of Law, Building a 21st Century Border, Building Resilient Communities). At the outset, both sides agreed cooperation was never better and expressed the hope new levels of trust would produce a more integrated strategy and even better concrete results. Presidential Security Assistant Brennan highlighted the need to create the proper architectural framework to achieve our objectives. Success required interagency cooperation and appropriate funding. We needed to focus on milestones for progress, hold

ourselves accountable for shortcomings, and be prepared to make adjustments along the way.

13. (SBU) Much of the discussion of Pillar One Q- disrupting and dismantling DTOs Q- centered around the need to fuse intelligence and operations. Alejandro Ramirez, the Director of CISEN's Policy unit, stressed the importance of trust among Mexican agencies and between the U.S. and Mexico to our achieving greater success in the future. Mexico wanted to identify priorities for cooperation on both sides of the border. CISEN's International Coordinator Gustavo Mohar briefed on CISEN's efforts to organize agencies into a cohesive unit and develop a protocol for cooperation based on transparency. He looked to teams from both sides to meet periodically to identify goals and plans for achieving them. Noting some informants had been killed, the U.S. agreed greater trust was vital to making progress. The Ambassador stressed our commitment to the creation of a fusion center to support targeting senior cartel leaders. But for such a center to work, Brennan's concerns about systems engineering must be addressed: who will man the center, from what agencies, how will they be vetted, who will have the authority to decide that intelligence should lead to action, who will take action, and how will this be done under extraordinary time constraints?

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14. (SBU) In the U.S.-led discussion of Pillar Two Q- institutionalizing the rule of law Q the U.S. side focused on the need to build strong law enforcement institutions capable of not only investigating and apprehending criminal figures but effectively prosecuting them. Reinforcing this message, Presidential Security Assistant Brennan recommended identifying concrete benchmarks for success in the area of prosecution. Cooperation should transition from the federal level to the state and local level over time. Respect for human rights respect needs to assume a central role in law enforcement activities. We need to continue to leverage support from other countries and train trainers as a dividend multiplier. Marisela Morales, the Director of the Attorney General's Organized Crime Division (SIEDO), remarked that Mexico had much to learn from the U.S. and hoped to borrow from the U.S. to better protect key witnesses.

15. (SBU) In their Pillar Three discussion of building a 21st century border, both sides recommitted themselves to developing processes that promote commerce and guarantee security. It was essential to improve coordination, expand information sharing, and create evaluation mechanisms. Brennan assured the Mexicans that DHS Secretary Napolitano appreciated the challenges and opportunities posed by our shared border and that she represented the strongest advocate for greater cooperation. Both sides celebrated the December 7 signing of the Enhanced Declaration of Principles to Strengthen Bilateral Economic and Security Cooperation as reflective of our shared commitment to creating structures to improve border cooperation.

16. (SBU) The Pillar Four discussion on building resilient communities centered on the need to develop a strategy to address the role of civil

society in meeting the challenges posed by organized crime. Brennan stressed the importance of attacking the culture of violence and unlawfulness, in part by giving communities greater ownership of the problems and the solutions. He urged Mexico to develop a communication strategy that would target vulnerable communities, including Mexican youth. For their part, Mexican representatives discussed efforts to integrate social development into its crime fighting strategy. CISEN Director Guillermo Valdes recommended we look more closely at social trends, including drug addiction rates, as part of an effort to get ahead of the curve. The Ambassador conveyed U.S. readiness to offer our expertise and experience to this end.

Examining Progress, Challenges in Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez

17. (SBU) Both sides appreciated the potential of our pilot projects in Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez to offer a genuine understanding of the challenges on the ground. Tijuana still faced considerable problems but had forged concrete progress on the law enforcement front thanks to greater information exchange and operational coordination between SEDENA and the municipal police. Participants acknowledged Mexican law enforcement leaders in Tijuana deserved much of the credit in producing lower levels of crime and violence but still considered the experience there instructive when looking at other parts of Mexico.

18. (SBU) Mexico was hopeful we could visit Ciudad Juarez January 14-15. In the meantime,

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Mexican participants described efforts to tackle the record levels of violence there with a new, more integrated approach. Mexico's Federal Police will assume the lead for law enforcement and focus on closing down establishments linked to criminal activities such as drug trafficking and prostitution in violent sectors of the city; the Mexican military will step back from law enforcement functions and dedicate itself primarily to manning perimeter checkpoints (see refelts). Jorge Tello, the Executive Secretary of the National Public Security System, insisted Mexico was dedicating all resources at its disposal to address the challenges both in terms of attacking organized crime but also building alliances with civil society. We hope to learn more about the particulars of the Mexican strategy, particularly when it comes to fostering greater cooperation across agencies in undertaking effective operations targeting cartel figures, when we visit Ciudad Juarez January 14-15.

Identifying the Keys to Success

19. (SBU) Over lunch, Secretary of Public Security Genaro Garcia Luna struck all of the right chords in his expansive survey of the challenges that face Mexico and the U.S. in combating organized crime. He described the objectives of organized crime as fourfold: 1) intimidate enemies competing with them over routes and territory; 2) foster impunity based on fear; 3) increase the political costs of confrontation; and 4) promote a counter culture of crime. Garcia Luna described efforts to

transform the law enforcement community's institutional capabilities. The Federal Police has expanded from 6,000 to 32,000 officers of which the number of intelligence analysts would increase from 80 to 600. He sought to facilitate greater information exchange and overall interoperability across Mexico's numerous and disparate police entities through a mechanism we know as Plataforma Mexico. In addition to reducing the levels of criminality and violence, he described the need to work effectively with Mexican state and municipal police forces as one of his greatest challenges. Garcia Luna expressed his appreciation for President Calderon's undivided commitment to fighting organized crime and his satisfaction with U.S.-Mexican cooperation, suggesting if both sides held firm we would see a reduction in violence.

¶10. (SBU) Brennan revisited the need to construct a strong institutional framework to advance the full array of our objectives through an integrated approach. Without the right architecture it would be impossible to develop and implement a coherent strategy. Under this approach, it was necessary to identify an individual who would lead Mexican efforts to fuse intelligence and operations and who would be trusted to represent the interests of all agencies and not manifest a bias toward his/her own agency. When it comes to conducting timely operations based on intelligence, it is important to reduce the levels of decision makers and empower the right people at lower levels to make decisions. Noting that it was difficult to craft the right design, Brennan suggested Mexico consider engaging a systems engineer who has no institutional bias toward any law enforcement entity. Rounding out this discussion, the Ambassador suggested focusing on the Mexican interagency's performance on past cases with a view to learning from those experiences and conducting tabletop exercises in order to improve future efforts.

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Forging Cooperation on the Principal Challenges

¶11. (SBU) Our last meeting centered on combining efforts to meet four separate challenges.

-- Mexico's Southern Border: SEGOB
Undersecretary for Population, Migration, and Religious Affairs Alejandro Poiré Romero spoke honestly to the challenges posed by Mexico's porous southern border with Guatemala and Belize. The government was taking steps to foster greater formality, increase security levels, impose more customs controls, and expand cooperation with the neighboring governments. He looked to cooperation with the U.S. under Merida to deliver essential training and infrastructure equipment.

-- The Head of Mexico's Financial Intelligence Unit (UIF) and the Mexican lead on anti-money laundering Luis Urrutia focused on Mexico's efforts to restructure its anti-money laundering architecture. As Mexico had recently adopted legislation on money laundering, Urrutia stressed the need to develop protocols for greater interagency cooperation. A lack of such coordination had obstructed progress on individual cases in the past. Presently, he

worked closely with the DEA but hoped to expand cooperation with ICE officials. He expressed his desire for greater access in the future to bank accounts and property in the U.S. to facilitate investigations. ICE representative Tracy Bardoff discussed her agency's work on a study to develop a baseline for our efforts on money laundering and bulk cash smuggling. Brennan remarked the U.S. needed to do more to develop a more comprehensive and coherent strategy to combat money laundering and that he was committed to developing that strategy upon his return to Washington.

-- Arms Trafficking: Mexican representatives noted that the majority of weapons authorities seized from criminal organizations originated from the United States. Both sides, however, applauded steps to improve cooperation, noting our joint working group had met five times over the last five months. We noted U.S. prosecutors were pursuing cases of multiple purchasers of weapons that have turned up in Mexico. Delivery of Spanish e-trace beginning in December would help us develop new cases against arms traffickers. It was agreed that the U.S. and Mexico would pick 3-5 cases that could be built to prosecute arms traffickers in the U.S. Both sides would collaborate to review a set of standard issues to be addressed with all arms seizures that could then enhance chances for prosecutions.

-- Judicial Cooperation: DOJ stressed our commitment to providing extensive training to Mexican judicial officials under Merida. However, it was essential Mexico move ahead expeditiously in adopting criminal code and procedural code reform to maximize the efficacy of our training programs.

Helicopter Transfer Scores Good Press

¶12. (SBU) The Mexican press reportedly widely the hand-over ceremony of five Bell-412 helicopters as representative of increased cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico in the fight against organized crime. Reports indicated that the hand-over was only the beginning of a large supply of equipment and other support provided to Mexican authorities by the U.S. Government under the Merida Initiative.

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Many indicated the U.S. would deliver upwards of \$632 million in equipment and other assistance in 2010 alone. Quoting Brennan's remarks describing the initial hand-over as substantial, some reports also indicated President Obama was committed to going beyond the original assistance envisioned by Merida.

¶13. (SBU) Comment. The visit by Presidential Security Assistant Brennan reinforced just how far the U.S.-Mexico relationship has evolved on security matters. We have moved well past a sterile debate over the risks to Mexico's sovereignty posed by greater cooperation towards a productive exchange about how to maximize the fruits of our combined efforts when it comes to matters such as money laundering and arms trafficking. The message that Mexico needs to adopt a security architecture that promotes interagency cooperation and operational efficiency was delivered loud and clear. Our present challenge lies now in helping Mexico

make that happen. Our upcoming joint visit to Ciudad Juarez will provide a concrete opportunity to focus on how both sides step up to the challenges posed by unacceptable levels of violence. The recent operation that netted notorious organized crime leader Arturo Beltran Leyva reminds us how much promise our cooperation holds out. Our January Policy Coordination Group meeting should afford us a chance to take stock of progress and outstanding challenges. End Comment.

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